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FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
TO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3917  
INFO RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 0259  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1013  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0736  
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI 0051  
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RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 0101  
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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/23/2019

TAGS: CH PREL PGOV PHUM GM

SUBJECT: GERMAN MOD AND MFA SHARE OUR CONCERN ABOUT CHINA'S GROWING MILITARY STRENGTH AND LACK OF TRANSPARENCY

REF: SECSTATE 28316

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR JEFFREY RATHKE FOR REASONS:  
1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Post delivered reftel to MOD and MFA counterparts, who shared our concerns about the Chinese military's lack of transparency. Poloff and DAO officer on April 8 delivered reftel to MOD East Asia Desk Officer Lt. Col. Stefan Klenz. Klenz stated that transparency is always an issue when meeting Chinese military officers, and that information travels on a "one way street" with them. The MOD is engaged in intensifying contacts, building trust, and trying to establish consistent dialogue with Chinese officers. Klenz sees willingness from China in all these areas, and he is surprisingly confident that Germany eventually can transplant its "way of military thinking" to the Chinese.

¶2. (C) Poloff on April 22 delivered reftel to MFA Deputy Head of East Asia Division Klaus Vietze, who noted that the MFA shares the U.S. concern about China's growing military power. The MFA is concerned that the military modernization creates too many worrisome "options" that could affect the status quo regarding Taiwan and the Spratly Islands. Vietze remarked that the MFA would be very interested in having a clear picture of the U.S. benchmarks for limiting hi-tech trade, especially in military areas. Also, he said it would be helpful to hear current U.S. views on missile defense in the region, as well as on Taiwan. Vietze stressed that missile defense especially could have destabilizing effects.

¶3. (C) Vietze also provided information on the unique way

that the MFA handles the human rights and rule of law dialogue with China. Germany essentially de-couples and "completely separates" the more difficult and contentious human rights issue from rule of law; decoupling the two allows Germany to make "progress" in assisting the development of the rule of law in China. Using this approach, the MFA addresses sensitive topics such as torture and religion. Vietze described torture as a long-term topic in German-Chinese relations, and the MFA approach focuses on improving prison standards rather than the more contentious aspects of torture. He also argued that the MFA's approach is yielding some progress in freedom of religion, where the MFA is trying to convince the Chinese of the socially stabilizing role of religion. In the long term, Vietze saw promise in engaging China on human rights issues.

Anania